

Through A Dragon's Eyes

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Summary: Those large alien green eyes had been watching him for some time now. And as unnerving as they were, Stoick the Vast knew he couldn't raise a blade in malice toward them. One-Shot

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****AUTHOR'S NOTE**:**

â€¢ I wanted to try something new. And this ended up being the result.

â€¢ This was originally part of my crossover drabble dump, but I figured it could stand enough on it's own as well.

â€¢ I do not own _How To Train Your Dragon_. _HTTYD_ belongs to Dreamworks and Cressida Cowell._

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><p>â•• The eye sees only what the mind is prepared to comprehend.
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- Henri Bergson

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><p>Those large alien green eyes had been watching him for some time now. As unnerving as they were, he knew he couldn't raise a blade in malice toward them. He owed the owner of those jade orbs far too much for idle threats and gruff banter. But that didn't mean he was happy about it.<p>

It had taken a large blow to his pride to admitâ€”even to himselfâ€”that his former enemy had been the first to see something that he had been far too blind to witness. Something that had been all but screaming at him for over a decade. But at times like these, when he and the ebony beast were the only two conscious beings in the

house, Stoick the Vast found his eyes drawn toward the Night Fury's tantalizing gaze.

It took him a moment to recall the dragon's nameâ€”Toothlessâ€”a name which Stoick still found unsuitable of such a creature. The dragon clearly had two rows of perfectly good, sharp teeth that likely wouldn't have hesitated to render the flesh from his bones not four months ago. It still perturbed the Viking chief to see the Night Fury lounging around his home, taking up space, and generally acting as if it owned the place.

But that wasn't the biggest blow to what he had once known to be the absolute truth between Vikings and dragons. That honor belonged to his son, who was currently taking up residence against the beast's side. He was sound asleep; had been for some time now. Clearly Hiccup had originally thought he was going to be sleeping in his own bed tonight since his prosthetic had been left discarded next to the steps leading up to his bedroom. It baffled Stoick's war hardened mind just how comfortable his only child looked with his back against the Night Fury's torso. A dragon once so feared by Vikings that all the devil had to do was dive-bomb out of the sky and over half of the village would be ducking for cover. For a time, Stoick hadn't even known Hiccup was there since the dragon had been covering him with one great wing. Its wing had retracted upon Stoick's approach, but its large eyes had been trained on the larger-than-life man ever since he had returned home earlier that evening.

Stoick had contemplated moving Hiccup upstairs to his bedroom, but something was stopping him in his tracks when he approached the odd pair residing on the floor a few feet away from him. He also had considered waking his son to make sure he had eaten dinner, but again something was halting him in his tracks. It had been about thirty minutes before the chieftain realized what was preventing him from assisting his only child.

It was those damn eyes.

They were a peculiar set of ovals. They seemed to glow against the black canvas that formed the dragon's wedge-shaped head like a pair of green fireballs. The little jade moons were lit up with a light that wasn't unlike the stars up the night sky. The black pupils expanded and retracted at will in an eerily synchronized dance. The inquisitive stare was only broken by the occasional blink. The only other times those eyes removed themselves from the man's bulky figure was when Hiccup had muttered a short slur of what Stoick guessed were supposed to be words or when the scrawnier Viking teen moved in his sleep to make himself more comfortable. Those black pupilsâ€”which were just barely wide enough to not be considered slits but still appearing cautiousâ€”were trained on Stoick's every move. It was almost as if the beast was studying him just as the Viking was examining the dragon's every move.

Why were those eyes watching him intently? Did the dragon want something from him or was it expecting the Viking to take some kind of action? Was it scared he would attack it? Did Toothless perceive Stoick the Vast as a threat to itself or the man's own son? Was the Night Fury hungry and looking toward the chieftain for sustenance? Or was the Night Fury merely as curious as its rider and wanted to know how another of Hiccup's kind behaved? With how vastly different father and son acted, it wasn't unlikely that someone would be

intrigued by the odd relationship that took place between generations. But such a thought would mean having to acknowledge Toothless for possessing human intellect. Something Stoick the Vast found too colossal a thought to even consider whatever truth it might hold even if his son would have adamantly argued in favor of the observation. Thus it was simply easier for him to consider one of the other options. The problem therein became figuring out which one it was without a shadow of a doubt. If Stoick was going to let Toothless reside in his house, he needed to be able to at least tell the difference between when the dragon was angry, upset, or happy.

At times, Toothless was as joyous as a well-fed pup and would purr so loudly it sounded more like rolling thunder than an overgrown lizard. When Hiccup had been bedridden and unconscious after the close encounter with the Red Death, the dragon had been as pitiful as a kicked puppy and crooned a sound that was so miserable that it managed to tug at everyone's heartstrings. Other times its pupils would narrow into dangerous slits like a panther on the hunt. At those times the Night Fury would react with a snarl, a hiss, or simply bare its teeth in a feral grimace. Still other times, like now, Toothless would become as still as a statue and look as regal as one of the gods up in Asgard sitting on their throne. Such a thought was unbecoming of his former enemy. But as Stoick stared back at the dragon, those eyes glinted with deep reserves of intellect. It was the same look that often flashed across Hiccup's eyes when he was struck with a new harebrained idea. The very same eyes that Valhallarama had once laid upon their son with more love than Stoick thought one human being was capable of withholding without exploding from the sheer pressure of it all.

So as to why those eyes had vexed him so was beyond Stoick's understanding. He had been raised to believe that dragon's were nothing more than vile, stupid monsters that needed to be slain before the devils ripped your throat out. Hiccup had been taught the same lessons, but he seemed to have considered their traditional ways of thinking to be primitive or foolish. Of all the dragon's Stoick had slain, he had always thought the creatures were the same as Hiccup's way of thinking toward Viking tradition. Yet those eyes told another story. Stoick wasn't one to sympathize with that which should have been his prey, but those emerald orbs held a sense of understanding that was rarely seen even among Vikings. Stoick was no fool and had recognized the signs but had ignored them in favor of stubborn judgment toward the old ways. And it had nearly cost him his only son.

Now here he sat back in his massive chair, his fingers on his right hand rubbing together as they tried to recall the feeling of smooth ebony scales. His horned helmet had been left to hang from a nail in the low horizontal support beam near the front door. The flames of the fire were growing smaller, but it would be fine for the time being.

All of Stoick's dragon related trophies had been vacated from the house. Not so much because Hiccup or Toothless had protested, but because Stoick would have felt a sense of shame if he were to allow them to remain when his son had worked so hard to make a world where such things would not be desired. In fact, a large sum of them had been removed before Hiccup had regained consciousness. There was a shark-skin rug at his feet and a few shields still hung on the walls. Most of the weapons had been removed or put into storage; out of

sight and out of mind. A pair of Stoick's larger swordsâ€”ones that had been in the Haddock family for generationsâ€”hung above the front door. He hoped to be able to pass at least one of them down to his son even if the boy would never have the physique needed to heft such a weapon off of the ground without the fear of toppling over. Oh well. That Hofferson girl would have better luck wielding them. The majority of the village would probably feel more at ease knowing Astrid was brandishing the blades at her enemy's throat rather than Hiccup nearly beheading himself just trying to heft it onto his narrow shoulders.

Toothless continued to watch him. Those eyes hardly blinked. The dancing flames from the fire pit between them reflected in those alien green eyes, making them appear to glow with the flowing embers. Every so often, the dragon would flick what Stoick assumed was an ear or flare its nostrils in some great exhale. Stoick guessed it was the beast's equivalent of a yawn, but other than that motion Toothless appeared no less tired than the Viking chief did.

Unsure of where to go from here, Stoick slowly eased himself up from his chair. He could have sworn Toothless stiffened from the movement, but the beast was quick to relax again. It would seem even the dragon was still getting used to their new living arrangements. If Stoick dared to allow himself to consider Toothless as human, he would have come to the conclusion that they were both uncertain and merely tolerated the others' presence because it was what Hiccup would have wanted. As if their facade of peace was only there to put the boy who had already been through far too much for anyone's liking at ease.

Ignoring such a train of thought, Stoick straightened himself and strode over toward the pair on the other side of the fire pit. He looked the part of a warrior about to charge headlong into battle, but his heart wasn't up to slaying those who dared oppose him. No. His heart was lying in another place. A place Stoick almost wished he could steal himself from being swept into.

Stoick was far too stubborn to let the illusion of harmony to be nothing more than that; a figment of his son's wild imagination. He was tired of playing the part of the ignorant parent. He wanted, for that moment, more than anything, to be the father Hiccup had always wanted but could never seem to grasp. Stoick had made a promise to himself that when all was said and done, he would be the figurehead every boy hoped to someday follow in the footsteps of. Hiccup hadn't shown any signs of resentment toward anyone who had misjudged or wronged him in the past. The man was now proud to call the once-village-misfit his son, but that didn't mean the feeling was mutual.

With a few simple strides, Stoick found himself standing before the great beast. He could feel those exotic eyes boring into every fiber of his being at such a close proximity. This was as far as he had gotten in his previous ventures before he had turned around to return to his chair.

The man barely gave those jade orbs a glance before he slowly brought himself into a kneeling position, his hands on his knees and his pride long swallowed. Stoick now sat at nearly eye level with the beast's raised head. The last time he had been in such a position, Stoick thought his son had prematurely joined his late wife. It was

his own fault such an event had transpired. It's every parent's worst nightmare. The overwhelming feeling of despair and agony had extinguished the fires within him in every way they could be destroyed. There was nothing left. Nothing but deep reserves of desperation for a means to turn back the hands of time to do things differently. A phantom of those very emotions began to creep up on him, but he sabotaged their plans with the ease of popping a dragon's head off with his bare hands. Not the best analogy given Stoick's current position but it was to be expected from a man of such fame. It was still a little disheartening to know such claims would be frowned upon within the next generation or two, but it was a sacrifice Stoick was readily willing to make.

After taking a deep breath to steady himself, Stoick reached up and began to unclasp his fur cloak. The dragon's eyes continued to watch him, but now they seemed to hold a sense of curiosity instead of tentative wariness. There were no growls nor did the beast bare its teeth toward the chieftain. The iron disks that were as large as a dinner plates which served as both protection and a means of holding his cloak down were gently placed on the ground next to him. Such care was uncharacteristic of such a man known for his brute strength, but Stoick felt he couldn't bring himself to arouse his son with how peacefully he was sleeping.

Stoick didn't dare to face those outlandish eyes following his every move. He would not ask the beast for permission to touch his own flesh and blood.

Instead, he draped his thick cloak of brown bear fur over his son's thin frame. It swallowed Hiccup's smaller build three times over, but it would serve its purpose to fight off the cold that always managed to somehow creep inside in the late winter hours. Stoick had taken utmost care not to awaken his son or startle the dragon who was dutifully watching over the boy. It was odd for someone of his size and reputation to be so cautious toward anyone, let alone a dragon.

For the dragon's part, Toothless neither raised its hackles nor did it attempt to remove Hiccup from his father's line of sight. The Night Fury remained stationed in place. Aside from the inflate and deflate of its chest, the dragon looked for all the world like an expertly carved sculpture of the blackest natural ores. It was far from perfect though. In the area of symmetry, Toothless was short a tail fin and several scars marred the dragon's hide. Toothless had obviously been in his fair share of tussles. Either that, or the Night Fury was as clumsy as his young human charge. But after everything Stoick had been through, he found it hard to imagine the beast tripping over its own claws.

It was when Stoick went back to his seated position that the dragon's ears lowered to their natural positions. The man took a deep breath before finally coming to see eye-to-eye with Toothless for the first time since he'd finally approached the expectant beast.

Stoick gave a slight nod of his head as if to confirm something within himself. He coughed quietly. Partially to clear his throat and also to garner Toothless's undivided attention if he didn't already have it. It went without speaking that both party members were uneasy with their close living quarters. But what was also just as obvious that they each wished to find some sort of compromise or middle

ground for the benefit of not only Hiccup but for the entire village. All of Berk had their eyes on the surviving Haddock. Hiccup because he was the first to befriend a dragon and Stoick because he was the first true Viking to openly accept a dragon into his home that wasn't one of his son's first students. He was setting an example for his people. If he couldn't make this work, then why should anyone else think they would stand a chance? Likewise, it wasn't entirely preposterous to assume all of the other dragons residing within Berk had their sights set on what courses of action Toothless might take. They all teetered on a very delicate balance. One Stoick was almost completely certain Hiccup wasn't even aware of despite what he might think he knew about the situation he had all but thrust Berk into.

So, putting aside what they both already knew, Stoick pressed onward in true Viking fashion.

"Thank you, Toothless."

Hearing his name, Toothless widened his pupils and exhaled deeply through flared nostrils. That had to have been the first time Stoick had ever regarded the dragon by the name Hiccup had so graciously given him. Although the Night Fury's face morphed into one of confusion rather than the blank, almost sarcastic stare Stoick was partially expecting the beast to give him. But he wasn't so much as shocked by the clear facial expression so much as he was perplexed at how easily and willingly Toothless allowed others to know how he was feeling.

Stoick had thanked Toothless once before for saving his son and the lingering meaning behind those words had bothered the Viking chief for some time now. In the past, those words would have tasted like ash in his mouth. But Stoick had been so overwhelmed with gratitude at the time he could hardly be blamed for letting those rarely spoken words of praise slip off of his tongue. And although some part of him wished to reach out and touch the scaled shadow, Stoick thought better of it and kept his hands to himself. If he was going to make this relationship work, he needed to respect the dragon's space.

Toothless bobbed his head slightly as if trying to convey that he wished for Stoick to explain himself in further detail. Honestly, Stoick was more baffled that he understood the gesture for what it was despite the obvious language barrier between man and beast. Maybe this was why Hiccup held so many conversations with Toothless thatâ€œat least at first glanceâ€œseemed very one-sided.

Not giving it another thought, Stoick chose to handle the matter as if it were a new provocation. Hiccup's great potential had arguably always been present, but everyone had been too typhlotic by the old ways to so much as glimpse it. However Toothless had seen something else there. "For all... this," Stoick said while slowly waving his left hand in a gesture toward the slumbering boy. For a brief moment, Toothless looked away from him to follow the Viking's use of kinesics. And all too quickly, Stoick found those luminescent orbs back on him again.

Toothless gave a short hooting sound in response. The dragon looked every bit as pleased as he was atramentous in color. He cocked his head to look away from Stoick. This time their broken eye contact

lasted longer than a few split seconds. Toothless opened his wide maw a couple of inches to reveal his bare gums. What purpose retractable teeth served was out of Stoick's limited imagination range, but he took the lack of visible canines as a good sign. He heard Toothless take in a large amount of air before a thin, controlled stream of fire shot out from the dragon's throat.

Startled, Stoick barely resisted the urge to holler an oath before he realized the flames were blowing right past him. The stream hit the dying fire in the fireplace behind Stoick, igniting the last of the kindling. The Viking stared at the fires until he heard the dragon's claws moving against the wood planks that made up the flooring material. When Stoick looked back at Toothless, he saw the dragon had lowered his head onto his front paws, his wide green eyes finally closed and his ears flattened against his neck. The dragon's body curled slightly around Hiccup, being careful not to make any sudden movements lest he awaken the boy. Toothless exhaled deeply, creating a gust of wind that battered against the now lively flame's might.

Stoick could only sit and watch. He was baffled by the dragon's change from alert and attentive to peaceful and lethargic in such a short lapse of time.

For whatever reason, Stoick couldn't resist smiling. Maybe it was because if Toothless was willingly taking his eyes off of the man, then the dragon had decided to trust him to some degree. Or maybe Toothless had merely lost interest or simply gave in to sleep's alluring embrace. But, whichever the cause, the effect it had on Stoick was more profound than he was expecting to feel.

Without giving the action much thought, Stoick reached his right hand out and steadily placed it on top of the dragon's resting head. The bridge of scales that traveled up the middle of the dragon's black skull rested perfectly with the middle of his large palm. Stoick's fingers began to gently rub the area between Toothless's ears as if they had a mind of their own. Again, Toothless reacted in a way Stoick wasn't quite expecting but still found as a pleasant surprise. Instead of yanking his head back or snapping in retaliation, Toothless merely cracked one eye open halfway, giving the man a lackadaisical expression, before closing it again. Then, and only then, did Toothless make a quiet _woof_ noise in content solace deep within his throat. The dragon was tolerating the man's touch.

Satisfied with the progress they had made, Stoick slowly pulled his hand back and rose to his feet. He picked up his heavy iron shoulder pans, discarding them in his chair, before throwing more wood on the fire. Not once did Toothless lift his head or open either of his eyes.

Before heading off to his own bed, Stoick stopped to look back at the pair sleeping on the living room floor. Neither boy nor dragon had moved since he'd gotten up. The fact that such a sight could be described as peaceful was a testament to just how far they'd come. He and Toothless had taken another big step in making their peace-pact between Vikings and dragons work for the long haul. It was an exhilarating feeling for one to possess. There was a lot more work to be done, but this was a nice push in what Stoick sincerely hoped was the right direction. If not just for Hiccup and Toothless, then for

the entire village as a whole“humans and reptiles alike.

A yawn escaped him despite such triumphant thoughts. Stoick blinked blearily, trying to stave off the sleep as best as he could. But he needed his rest. And if Toothless was willing to call it a night, then why couldn't he? With that final course of action in mind, Stoick forced back another powerful yawn before retreating into his room.

Tonight they'd made a positive breakthrough. And that was all Stoick could ask for. Not just for the tentative alliance of peace between man and beast, but in his relationship with his son. Hopefully this step to accept Toothless could show he was willing to go the extra mile. But it was unlikely Hiccup would ever know of the almost completely non-verbal transaction that had taken place not even ten feet away from him.

Chuckling at the irony of it all to himself, Stoick too retired for the evening for some much needed rest.

* * *

><p>FOOT NOTES**:

â€¢ I tried my damndest for the focus of this one-shot to be between Stoick and Toothless with as little dialogue as possible.

â€¢ I was trying to convey a sort of lesson Stoick internally goes through from trying to force himself to except Toothless for WHAT he is rather what WHO he is. Hence the change in pronouns from "it" to "he" after Stoick calls Toothless by his name. Whether Stoick himself notices this or not I purposely left open to interpretation.

â€¢ Writing as Stoick is about as challenging as I was expecting it to be. Even more so than portraying Toothless. And I have no plans to attempt it again in the near future either.

â€¢ If you would, please leave a comments/review if you liked this one-shot. If you have an idea on how I can improve, please let me know. If there was a particular part you liked, I would appreciate it if you are willing to take the time to let me know.

End
file.